

GRADUATE STUDIES BOARD

MINUTES

Thursday 12 January 2012

9.00-11.40 a.m. in A204

Present: Dr Lisa Looney (Chair), Ms Gillian Barry, Dr Dermot Brabazon, Dr Pat Brereton, Ms Jennifer Bruton, Ms Goretti Daughton, Dr Tracy Dixon, Dr Bernadette Flanagan, Dr Gabriel Flynn, Ms Louise McDermott (Secretary), Dr Enda McGlynn, Ms Patricia Moore, Dr Anne Morrissey, Dr Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, Professor Colm O’Gorman, Ms Caitríona Rowsome, Dr Ana Terres

Apologies: Dr Christine Loscher

In attendance: Ms Gráinne Curran

The Chair welcomed Dr Enda McGlynn, newly-appointed Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Science and Health, to his first meeting of the Graduate Studies Board. She also welcomed Ms Gráinne Curran to her first meeting of the GSB in the capacity of observer.

SECTION A: MINUTES AND RELATED ISSUES

1. Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted subject to the inclusion of four additional submissions under Item 5, one additional submission under Item 6 and two submissions under Item 13.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2011

The minutes were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

- 3.1** Noted, with respect to the joint research work by the University, St Patrick's College and Dundalk Institute of Technology, that it was at an advanced stage and a Memorandum of Understanding is not the most appropriate way to facilitate the joint research. (Item 3.3)
- 3.2** With regard to the revised postgraduate research forms, it was noted that some minor adjustments needed to be made and agreed that the GSB members would re-read the forms and submit comments about them to Ms Rowsome. A notification would then be sent by the Registry to all relevant staff to request them to discontinue use and storage of old versions of forms and instead to use only those available on line. It was suggested that students who had exceeded, or were likely to exceed, the maximum registration period might be notified of this by the Registry and that, for future reference, a process might be put in place to ensure that appropriate notifications were sent to students as a matter of course. Similarly, students who had exceeded, or were likely to exceed, the 21-month deadline for transfer to or confirmation on the PhD register might be notified, with a process being put in place to ensure notifications in future as a matter of course. With regard to the supervisory panels, it was noted that discussions are in progress with all Faculties and O'scail to ensure a full understanding of the procedures and that the ownership of these procedures lies with the Faculty rather than with individual supervisors. (Items 3.2 and 3.24)
- 3.3** Noted that the recipients of the DCU Daniel O'Hare Scholarships 2010 and 2011 had been written to in order to make the terms and conditions clear to them. (Item 3.3)
- 3.4** Noted that a mechanism was under consideration in the Registry for ensuring that the same external examiner was not nominated by different Schools in the University, or by one or more of the linked colleges, in such a way as to lead to the risk that the nomination might be in contravention of the regulations on frequency of nomination. (Item 3.9)
- 3.5** Noted that satisfactory information had been obtained about the word count of a thesis and the PGR4 form had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 3.15)

- 3.6** Noted, with respect to a request for early submission, that a detailed case had been made by the School and the request had been approved by Chair's action. (Item 3.16)
- 3.7** Noted that Ms Moore had joined Academic Council as representative of the research student community. Noted too that the terms of reference of Academic Council would be updated to reflect the fact that this community is now represented as a matter of course, that consideration would be given to the future nomination procedure for the student representative on the GSB (who would also be the representative on Academic Council), that a representative of students on taught postgraduate programmes would join Academic Council as soon as he/she had been identified by the Students' Union and that practice in other universities with regard to the representation of students on taught postgraduate programmes on GSBs (or equivalent committees) would be ascertained. (Item 3.18)
- 3.8** Noted that a number of issues which had been identified in respect of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* would be kept under review and considered in the context of the overall review of the *Regulations* at the end of 2011/12. (Items 3.21, 3.24, 4 and 5)
- 3.9** Noted that a supervisor had been informed that a decision on a special-case admission request had been made on the basis of the specific circumstances of the case rather than on the basis of the information made available through NARIC. (Item 3.22)
- 3.10** Noted that clarification had been obtained in respect of the wording of a section in a PGR3 form and the request for confirmation on the PhD register had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 4.4)
- 3.11** Noted that information as to the registration status of a student had been obtained and the request for confirmation on the PhD register had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 4.6)
- 3.12** Noted, with respect to a student who had been advised to undertake two taught modules, that he had registered for the Level 9 module in the context of Graduate Training Elements and for the Level 8 module on a single-module basis. (Item 4.7)
- 3.13** Noted that the name of the co-supervisor and details about the student's registration status had been included on a PGR3 form and the request for confirmation on the PhD register had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 4.9)

- 3.14** Noted that the name of the internal examiner had been included on a PGR3 form and the request for confirmation on the PhD register had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 4.10)
- 3.15** Noted, with respect to the eligibility for internal examining of staff due to retire, that individuals recently retired were eligible to act as internal examiner if they wished and if they were suitable in terms of usual criteria, though there would be no expectation that they should do so. The Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research to be alert to situations of this nature that might arise in the near future, given the imminence of the 29 February 2012 deadline for the retirement of public service staff under specific conditions. She noted that guidelines relating to this issue – including references to the desirability that retired staff, whether deployed as internal or (where eligible) external examiners, are research active – would be helpful as a complement to *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees for Research and Thesis*, and undertook to draft such guidelines for the consideration of the GSB. (Item 5)
- 3.16** Noted, in the case of two nominated external examiners, that it had been confirmed that no conflict of interest issues existed, and the nominations of these examiners had therefore been deemed approved. (Items 5.10 and 5.16)
- 3.17** Noted, in the case of three nominated external examiners, that satisfactory information had been obtained about supervising and examining experience, and the nominations had therefore been deemed approved. (Items 5.11, 5.14 and 5.21)
- 3.18** Dr Dixon explained that the implementation of the IUA agreement requires that all universities must provide information on the processes whereby inter-institutional Graduate Training Elements are managed. With respect to non-DCU students taking DCU GTEs, they will be deemed to be visiting students and their results will be considered at Graduate Research Awards Boards and Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees (the procedures for conducting the latter will need some modification to take account of this). With respect to DCU students taking non-DCU GTEs, procedures will be fine-tuned at a meeting of relevant staff members to be held later in January 2012, but they are likely to involve a requirement that a student notify DCU of the results obtained so that they can be added to the DCU record. The Chair expressed appreciation to Dr Dixon, Registry staff and Faculty Administration staff for the very significant work carried out to date in relation to all these issues. (Item 7.1)

- 3.19** Noted that a revised version of the report on Graduate Training Elements had been made available electronically to the GSB on 2 December 2011 and included details of GTEs being delivered as part of structured, taught and professional doctoral programmes as well as those that exist as stand-alone modules. Noted that the Standard Operating Procedure in respect of GTEs would be updated when appropriate. (See also Item 7.2 below.) (Items 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4)
- 3.20** Noted, with respect to Graduate Training Elements in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, that all recommended changes had been incorporated and the GTEs had therefore been deemed approved. (Item 8.1)
- 3.21** Noted, with respect to Graduate Training Elements in the Faculty of Science and Health, that all recommended changes had been incorporated and the GTEs had therefore been deemed approved. With respect to two other GTEs, it was noted that these belonged to the National University of Ireland, Galway rather than to DCU and that therefore they did not require formal DCU approval as they fall under the inter-institutional MOU on structured programmes and had undergone NUIG approval. With respect to placing these modules on the Faculty of Science and Health academic structure, a meeting of stakeholders will take place on 26 January 2012 at which this and related issues will be discussed. For the present, students outside the MSc in Bioinnovation are not eligible to take these modules. (Item 8.2)
- 3.22** Noted that the footnote on supervisory panels, for incorporation into *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*, had been worded, agreed by the GSB, approved by the University Standards Committee at its meeting of 24 November 2011 and approved by Academic Council at its meeting of 14 December 2011. (Item 9.1)
- 3.23** Noted that the Chair had been in discussion with the Training and Development section of the Human Resources Office about training for supervisors and independent chairs, that she had also contacted Professor Alan Kelly, her counterpart in University College Cork, and that T&D staff and Professor Kelly had been in dialogue with each other and with a representative of NAIRTL. Discussions about these issues are also in progress across the sector more generally. Consideration is being given to having short, focused University courses in addition to longer ones. Noted that Dr Gina Wisker from the University of Brighton, an expert on supervision, was due to give a workshop in All Hallows College on 11 February 2012; Dr Flanagan invited any interested members of DCU or the other linked colleges to take part and undertook to communicate the details to the Chair. The concept of involving the linked colleges in training generally was welcomed. The Chair noted that she intended to contribute to training sessions for staff by

- presenting aspects of the new *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis*. (Item 9.2)
- 3.24** Noted that the procedures for archiving the previous *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* on the University website would be completed as soon as technical issues were resolved. (Item 9.3)
- 3.25** Noted that all research candidates who had graduated in November 2011 had been invited to complete an exit survey, that the response rate had been approximately 30%, that the results were being analysed and that they would be submitted for the consideration of the GSB as soon as possible. Noted too that in no circumstances would personalised comments be made available for perusal, and that the timing of the survey was designed to dovetail appropriately with the timing of other surveys (such as HEA First Destinations). (Item 12.1)
- 3.26** Noted that the nomination of Professor Michael Larkin of Queen's University Belfast as external examiner for an MSc student in the School of Biotechnology had been approved by Chair's action on 9 November 2011.
- 3.27** Noted that the nomination of Professor Mark Smales of the University of Kent as external examiner for a PhD student in the School of Biotechnology/NICB had been approved by Chair's action on 14 November 2011.
- 3.28** Noted that a request for a change of internal examiner in respect of a PhD student in SALIS, to facilitate the signing off of corrections post-*viva voce* examination as the original examiner had become unavailable, had been approved by Chair's action on 14 November 2011.
- 3.29** Noted that a request for a change of internal examiner in respect of an MSc student in the School of Health and Human Performance, as the originally nominated examiner had become unavailable, had been approved by Chair's action on 23 November 2011.

SECTION B: INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ISSUES

- 4. Applications for transfer to the PhD register or confirmation on the PhD register**
- 4.1 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.1, School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Approved.

- 4.2 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.2, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.3 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.3, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.4 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.4, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.5 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.5, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.6 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.6, School of Biotechnology
Approved subject to the form being signed by the Head of School.
- 4.7 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.7, International Centre for Neurotherapeutics/
School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.8 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.8, International Centre for Neurotherapeutics/
School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.9 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.9, Dublin City University Business School
Approved. Agreed that, with respect to future applications, all the sections
of PGR3 form would be used and additional documentation would therefore
not need to be appended.
- 4.10 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.10, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 4.11 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.11, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 4.12 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.12, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 4.13 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.13, School of Chemical Sciences
Approved.
- 4.14 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.14, School of Chemical Sciences
Noted that, as the student is already on the PhD register, there was no need
to consider an application for transfer/confirmation.
- 4.15 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.15, School of Communications
Approved.
- 4.16 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.16, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 4.17 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.17, School of Electronic Engineering
Approved.
- 4.18 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.18, School of Law and Government
Approved.
- 4.19 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.19, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing
Engineering
Approved.

- 4.20 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.20, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved.
- 4.21 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.21, School of Nursing and Human Sciences
Approved. Agreed that it would be mentioned to the School that forms should be typed.
- 4.22 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.22, School of Biotechnology
Approved.
- 4.23 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/4.23, School of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
Approved. Agreed, however, that the supervisors would be requested to advert to the fact that progress on the thesis appeared to be somewhat slow and to raise with the student the issue of what the most appropriate registration status would be for him.

Noted that there appeared to be different approaches in different Schools/Faculties with respect to the completion of the PGR3 form, with some staff members taking the view that its purpose is to indicate that the student has undertaken sufficient work to enable him/her to embark on PhD studies and others taking the view that the purpose is to indicate that completion of a PhD is likely. Noted too that, where the latter approach is taken, it may explain the relatively late (post 21 months) submission of transfer/confirmation requests by Schools (though lateness in this respect is undesirable and the intention is that, as the new *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* are implemented in full, there will be a significant decrease in the number of late submissions). Agreed that the Associate Deans for Research would lead discussions on these issues in the Faculty Research Committees.

Noted that it was intended to set up a Facebook page to improve communications with research students and that it would, *inter alia*, provide reminders about timeframes and deadlines. More generally, the aim is to have the page function as a means of fostering a sense of community among research students, though it is recognised that not all students will necessarily choose to avail of it. Other means of communication, e.g. the guidelines booklet for research students, will continue to be used.

5. Appointment of external examiners

- 5.1 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.1, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Dr Ambrose Furey, Cork Institute of Technology
Approved.

- 5.2 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.2, PhD, School of Biotechnology
Professor James McLaughlin, University of Ulster
Approved.
- 5.3 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.3, PhD, Dublin City University Business
School
Professor Birgit Schyns, Durham University
Approved.
- 5.4 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.4, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Professor Mary Jane Meegan, Trinity College Dublin
Approved subject to the form being signed by the student.
- 5.5 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.5, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Professor Kent Choquette, University of Illinois
Approved.
- 5.6 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.6, MSc, School of Physical Sciences
Dr Steven Shannon, University of Michigan
Approved.
- 5.7 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.7, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
Professor Andrew Evans, Aberystwyth University
Approved.
- 5.8 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.8, PhD, School of Physical Sciences
Professor Andreas Waag, Braunschweig University of Technology
Approved.
- 5.9 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.9, PhD, School of Chemical Sciences
Dr Jacques Schmitt, CNRS, France
Approved.
- 5.10 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.10, PhD, School of Mechanical and
Manufacturing Engineering
Dr Con Sheahan, University of Limerick
Approved.
- 5.11 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.11, PhD, School of Mechanical and
Manufacturing Engineering
Dr Peter Ball, Cranfield University
Approved.
- 5.12 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.12, EdD, St Patrick's College
Dr Paula Maycock, Trinity College Dublin
Approved.
- 5.13 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.13, MSc, School of Computing
Dr Matt Huenerfauth, City University of New York
The nominated external examiner was approved. It was agreed to ask the
School to provide written confirmation that there is appropriate experience
and expertise on the part of the proposed internal examiner and that the

person in question enjoys a level of independence that will enable the role to be carried out satisfactorily.

- 5.14 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.14, PhD, School of Electronic Engineering
Professor Xinxin Niu, Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications
Approved.
- 5.15 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.15, PhD, School of Nursing and Human
Sciences
Dr Kiran Sarma, National University of Ireland, Galway
Approved.
- 5.16 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.16, PhD, School of Nursing and Human
Sciences
Professor Anne Marie Rafferty, King's College London
Approved.
- 5.17 Student ref. GSB/2012/A1/5.17, PhD, School of Biotechnology/NICB
Professor Mark Pegram, University of Miami
The nominated external examiner was approved. It was agreed to ask the
School/NICB to provide written confirmation that there is appropriate
experience and expertise on the part of the proposed internal examiner and
that the person in question enjoys a level of independence that will enable
the role to be carried out satisfactorily. It was also agreed to ask the
School/NICB to ensure that there is compliance with *Academic Regulations
for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* with respect to the
supervisory arrangements.

Agreed that, where a Head of School is internal examiner, there is no need for the PGR4 form to be countersigned by another member of the School (and noted that there is no provision for this).

Noted that there might be scope for including on the PGR4 form a reminder (e.g. in the form of a footnote) that internal examiners must be appropriately experienced and independent; however, further consideration of this matter will be undertaken in the context of the review of *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* at the end of 2011/12.

Noted, with respect to the nomination of external examiners from distant countries, that while travel expenses might in some instances (not invariably) be higher than average for nominees it is important to ensure that the most appropriate examiners are selected. Noted too that selection of examiners from a wide geographical area tends to extend knowledge of DCU overseas.

Noted that, while a small number of late submissions had been accepted (on the basis of the normal, restricted criteria for accepting such items), every effort should be made by Schools to ensure timely submission of documentation.

6. Other student issues

6.1 Request from a candidate to write the thesis in French (French Department, St Patrick's College)

Decision deferred pending the submission of detailed information as to the reason for the request.

6.2 Request to allow a candidate to graduate before 2013 (School of Law and Government)

6.2.1 Noted that it would have been preferable for the issue of the candidate's prior learning to be discussed at the application/admission stage rather than at the point where completion of the research is being envisaged.

6.2.2 Noted that a policy on Recognition of Prior Learning with respect to research students was required and should be developed.

6.2.3 In the absence of such a policy, the request to uphold the School's recognition of the candidate's prior learning was not considered. However, the request for submission prior to 2013 was approved, given the circumstances of the specific case and subject to receipt of satisfactory information about the candidate's reason for transferring from the full-time to the part-time register (in the event of receipt of such information, the approval can be confirmed by means of Chair's action).

6.2.4 Noted that the issues relating to part-time vis-à-vis full-time registration, including the relationship with concepts such as blended learning, required further discussion and that such discussion would take place at a future meeting of the GSB.

SECTION C: POLICY AND STRATEGY ISSUES

7. Proposed Graduate Training Elements: UM405 – Uaneen Module (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

7.1 Approved, and will be included on the academic structure for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Agreed that the Extracurricular Committee would

be requested to ensure that the module descriptor was completely accurate and up to date. Noted that not all Faculties are considering its addition to their academic structure, as it is a NFQ Level 8 module and discussion as to the desirability and appropriateness of including Level 8 modules as GTEs is under way.

7.2 Noted that the Chair was in the process of drafting proposals, for eventual consideration by Executive, on policies with respect both to the mainstreaming and funding of GTEs. Fruition of this work may have to await the outcome of the forthcoming HEA review of Fourth Level Ireland, and it is therefore not likely that the GSB will have an opportunity to discuss the issues in detail at its meeting of 8 March 2012.

8. Academic Regulations: implementation and monitoring

8.1 *Cotutelle* agreements

8.1.1 The Chair noted that a process for operationalising *cotutelle* agreements was required and that she was in discussion with the President's Office with a view to developing this early in 2012 for the consideration of the GSB (ideally at its meeting of 8 March 2012). She noted too that a number of other higher education institutions had recently put in place similar processes.

8.1.2 With respect to research students residing abroad, the Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research to liaise with supervisors to ensure that details of the arrangements in respect of all such students were known and documented (by means, where appropriate and if it is approved, of the new form PGR13, currently available in a draft version).

8.2 Management of professional doctorates and structured PhDs

Noted that the Chair and Dr Dixon had met those responsible for managing the University's professional doctorates and that discussions were in progress to facilitate clarity in respect of a number of process issues. Noted too that the meeting of 26 January 2012 (referred to at Item 3.21 above) would incorporate consideration of the management of structured PhDs.

8.3 Card fee

8.3.1 The proposal to change the process was approved subject to the substitution of a deadline of 31 December for the deadline of 1 December and the modification of the last sentence in the second-last paragraph (which refers to supervisors'

responsibilities). The updated proposal document will first be circulated to the GSB on an electronic basis and then submitted for the consideration of Executive.

- 8.3.2** The Chair requested the Associate Deans for Research to highlight to Faculty Research Committees that students now in their second year of research would be liable for full fees in their fourth year (if any), and that the possibility of making the card fee available both at the end of third year and at the end of fourth year may be considered.
- 8.3.3** The Chair expressed appreciation, on behalf of the GSB, to Mr Jonny Hobson of the Graduate Research Office for the work he had carried out in relation to the card fee issue.

9. MSc in Bioinnovation

Noted that the proposal in respect of this programme had been approved formally by the Education Committee at its meeting of 11 January 2012 and that future proposals for similar structured research programmes would be submitted for the consideration of the EC.

10. University grants and scholarships for research students

Agreed that some of the necessary discussion could take place outside the GSB meetings - e.g. in relation to the evaluation criteria for the Daniel O'Hare Scholarships and the management of the accommodation scholarships. With regard to the former, it was noted that the available funding is likely to decrease. With regard to the latter, it was noted that the Chair is in discussion with the Secretary's Office, the Access and Student Recruitment Office and the Deans of Faculty. Agreed also that the GSB would consider the broad issues with respect to grants and scholarships at a future meeting. Noted that the travel grants had proved particularly popular and successful.

11. Advice for students and supervisors on publication of research work

Agreed that the advisory document would be adopted and publicised, subject to the inclusion of a sentence to indicate that intellectual property issues, where relevant, should be resolved in advance of discussions about publication. Agreed that the amended advisory document would be made available to the Research Committee and that the Chair and Dr Dixon would give consideration to the optimum method of making this and other types of advisory documentation easily accessible to stakeholders.

12. Recommendations on English-language requirements

Detailed discussion was deferred to the meeting of 8 March 2012. Noted that, in the event approval was granted for the proposal to require students to withdraw from the University if they did not meet the English-language requirements within one year of registration, the locus of responsibility for implementing this would need to be identified and agreed.

13. Any other business

- 13.1** The Chair requested that Associate Deans for Research remind colleagues that internal examiners as well as supervisors of candidates being considered are required to attend the upcoming Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees.
- 13.2** The Chair noted that a request had been submitted by the Associate Deans for Research to change the dates of the Faculty Awards Boards for Research Degrees in Spring 2013 and that she intended to discuss this with the President and the Deputy President/Registrar (given that Academic Council had, at its meeting of 14 December 2011, approved the Academic Calendar for 2012/13) and with the Registry (from the point of view of feasibility of implementation, in the event of approval).

Date of next meeting:

**Thursday 8 March 2012
9.00 a.m. in A204**

Signed: _____
Chair

Date: _____